



COMMISSION ON CHILD CARE

May 3, 2021

The Honorable Tom Hucker
President, Montgomery County Council
100 Maryland Avenue, 6th Floor
Rockville, Maryland 20850

President Hucker and Members of the County Council:

The Commission on Child Care (CCC) advises the County Executive and County Council on the development, implementation, and effectiveness of government policies, programs, and services that enhance community support for quality, affordable and accessible child care. We appreciate the opportunity to provide input to the Council around areas of critical importance to the lives of Montgomery County's youngest residents and their families.

Through this letter, the CCC would like to urge the County Council to support the County Executive's FY22 budget priorities for early childhood. The proposed budget includes critical and needed additional supports for Early Childhood Services, including additional staff for the County's Child Care Resource and Referral Program, as well as an on-staff therapist for Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (IECMHC). This too, is an area where the CCC has urged the Council to invest additional funds, and now, as children and families cope with the dual pandemics of COVID-19 and racial injustice, a needed resource for the County's programming. Finally, the budget prioritizes the transition of several contractor positions to permanent positions increasing the stability of the workforce that supports children and families in our County.

Other important increases included that the CCC strongly supports are those to Healthy Families Montgomery, which will support families through home visiting, reducing the risk to very young children of abuse and neglect, and to the County's early intervention services (Infants and Toddlers Program) for interpretation and translation of the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) so that all of the County's families can be guaranteed access to this critical document.

Department of Health and Human Services

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Finally, in support of the County's child care providers, a workforce whose importance has been demonstrated in innumerable ways in the past year, the CCC strongly supports proposals to reduce permitting costs for providers who are located in County facilities, and the extension of no-cost professional development for trainings that are required by County or state licensing regulations. We urge the County to continue the scholarships at Montgomery College for early childhood pathways and degrees for the development of a strong workforce.

In addition to these high-priority items, the CCC urges the Council to expand funding for programs and services that show promise for our youngest residents and their families, such as the extension of the Montgomery BASICS program, support for language development in infants and toddlers through the LENA Start pilot, and other budget increases that center on equity in early childhood services and support providers, families and children as our communities recover from COVID.

We thank you for your time, service, and consideration.

Sincerely,



Lindsey Allard Agnamba
Chair

c: Marc Elrich, County Executive